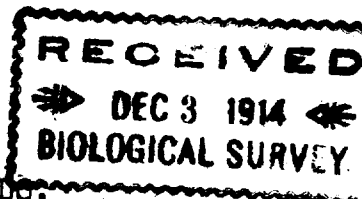


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ENCOURAGEMENT IN BREEDING FUR BEARING ANIMALS.

Washington, D. C. Up to the present time experiments in breeding fur bearers have been carried on only with minks and martens. At the two stations - Prichard, Idaho, and the National Zoological Park - minks have bred, and the healthy condition of the young animals promises success. The stock of martens was secured too late for the animals to breed this season. In the coming year it is intended to add raccoons, skunks, and possibly foxes to the list of animals to be included in these experiments.

During the spring an assistant visited New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and other portions of the eastern British Provinces and New England for the purpose of studying the methods in vogue in the region for rearing foxes and other fur bearers. Data on improved methods of raising foxes will soon be published, to bring up to date preliminary information furnished in 1908 in Farmers' Bulletin 328, Silver Fox Farming.

Moleskins have been extensively used in this country during the last few years in making fur garments, and practically all of the supply has been imported from Europe. In the belief that the common mole of eastern United States produces fur of equal value, skins were submitted to professional furriers, who stated that the quality is superior to the foreign product. A report on the economic status of the eastern species was published during the year. The mole inhabiting the northwestern coast is larger than the common eastern species, and a number of these have been collected in order to obtain a report on the quality of the pelt. If the texture of the fur proves to be as good as that of the eastern animal, there is no reason why trappers should not secure a good income by capturing these animals, as the area they inhabit is extensive. In many localities an acre of ground supports as many as a hundred individuals. If this little animal can be profitably trapped for its fur the problem of freeing agricultural areas from it will practically be solved.

Investigations into the economic value of North American skunks resulted in the publication of a Farmers' Bulletin on the subject. It has been found that this animal is one of the most useful of native mammals and a most efficient help to the farmer and the orchardist in their warfare against insect and rodent pests. As a source of fur it is also a commercial asset, the skins netting trappers about \$3,000,000 annually. As the skunk is valuable in its activities as well as for its fur, experiments in breeding the animals in captivity are recommended. (Extract from Annual Report of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture).

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